

3428 Fairhill Drive, S.E.  
Washington 25, D. C.  
August 7, 1957

Professor Donald Hudson  
Department of Geography  
University of Washington  
Seattle, Washington

Dear Don,

To get answers for your questions concerning the availability of statistics, I have called a number of geographers in various Government agencies and must report that there is no effort on the part of anyone that I have been able to find to keep information of the type you want. The Army Map Service, for example, would be interested in heights of mountains in order to indicate spot heights on their various topographic series; however, such information is hidden throughout their files -- probably filed by compilation sheet numbers -- with no effort to systematically organize a file on the heights of mountains.

The measurements that are made for specified uses of various Government agencies would vary according to the methods used and would be fairly inaccessible, either because the agency would not allow files to be searched for the data or the location of the data in the file would be related to a wide variety of subject headings. You may be interested in knowing that inquiries coming to the Corps of Engineers on lengths of rivers and heights of mountains are answered out of Goode's Atlas or some other ready reference. People responsible for answering these inquiries would never think of referring the question to Army Map Service experts for investigation. If other agencies treat their inquiries in the same way, I would suspect that there would be little to gain from asking Coast and Geodetic Survey or Geological Survey for specific data.

The only practical suggestion that I can offer is that authors of articles in the Encyclopaedia Britannica be required to cite their sources for those items with which you are concerned. From these citations, you could build a card file which, through a long process of evaluation and selection, could become authoritative.

I wish I could be of more help.

Sincerely,

25X1A9a

